Why A Royal Arch Mason?

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(From a leaflet published by the Grand Chapter, R. A. M., of New York)

Every Master Mason aspires to attain the summit of Ancient Craft Masonry. Many feel with regret that it is not practicable for them to share in all the light shed by the several bodies; but all wish most earnestly to receive all the light and instruction which pertain to the *Ancient Craft*—the origin and foundation of the Institution.

In the life of every Master Mason, moreover, there comes a time when he realizes that he has not yet attained that goal, that he is not yet in possession of all the rights and light of a Master Mason, as these were known and understood by his ancient brethren.

But he does not realize that the goal of his aspirations is near at hand —in the Royal Arch Degree.

All Symbolic Masonry has its source in the Grand Lodge of England. Section I of the Constitution of the United Grand Lodge of England declares that "pure, ancient Masonry consists of three Degrees and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch."

The Degree of Royal Arch Mason is founded upon the destruction of the first and the building of the second Temple. The ceremonies of the Degree have an interesting and graphic historical setting, and a profound and reverential moral significance. The Royal Arch Degree is the complement of the Master's Degree, the unfolding into a second volume of the history of that which was lost to its final recovery. Without the Royal Arch, the Master's Degree is like a song half sung, a tale partly told, or a promise unfulfilled.

The preparatory Degrees conferred in the Chapter are those of Mark Master Mason, Past Master and Most Excellent Master. All are beautiful, all are interesting, all teach valuable lessons, but the Most Sublime Degree of Royal Arch Mason is more august, sublime and important than all that precedes it. It brings to light many essentials of the Craft contained ONLY in this Most Sublime Degree and explains many cryptic passages of the first three Degrees incomprehensible to the Master Mason. Without a knowledge of these the Masonic character cannot be complete.

It has been said that "The Royal Arch stands as the rainbow of promise in the Ritual; it stands as the promise of the resurrection; of that which was lost and that which shall be recovered."

The value of Royal Arch Masonry will be justly appreciated by all who are Exalted to that Most Sublime Degree, particularly by those who are seeking to complete their Masonic education. It reveals the full light of Ancient Craft Masonry, presents it as a complete system in accordance with the original plan and confers at last the rights and light of a Master Mason in fact as well as in name. It truly leads to a fuller understanding of the purposes and spirit of Freemasonry, for standing upon this towering summit we are able for the first time to perceive the completeness of the Ancient Craft and to understand how all its forms and ceremonies, from the Entered Apprentice to the Master Mason's Degree, are the preparation for the final goal, the Most Sublime Degree of Royal Arch Mason.

Our membership consists only of those who have been regularly initiated, passed and raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in a just and duly constituted Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, who are properly vouched for, in good standing in their respective Lodges and in the community in which they reside.

We would have all such receive the light and instruction which can be communicated only in the Royal Arch Degree. Any Royal Arch Mason can give full information on how to proceed to that end.